

Summary of Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) Research Conducted with Latino and Hispanic Families

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Background

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) is an evidence-based home visiting program focused on parent-involved learning for preschool age children. HIPPY programs aim to prepare children for long-term school success starting at kindergarten entry by empowering parents as their first and most important teachers. It was developed for families who have risk factors associated with lower academic achievement including economic disadvantage, limited English language proficiency, and social isolation. HIPPY was established in Israel in 1969 and is currently implemented in 13 countries. HIPPY programs were established in the United States in 1984 and now serve more than 15,000 economically disadvantaged families across 21 states and the District of Columbia. All HIPPY programs share the same four core components: a standard developmentally appropriate school readiness curriculum, role-play as method of instruction, peer home visitors, and home visiting as the service delivery method. Community based home visitors meet with parents in their homes to role-play early education curricular activities one hour a week for thirty weeks per program year. Parents then spend approximately 15 to 20 minutes per day with their children using the reviewed HIPPY books and activity packets. In addition to home visits, programs also have regularly scheduled parent group meetings.

The National Research and Evaluation Center (NREC) at the University of South Florida (USF) is the national research center for HIPPY USA. The purpose of the NREC is to advance the evidence base for HIPPY and support the research and evaluation efforts of HIPPY programs across the United States.

Purpose: The third NREC research brief presents findings from peer reviewed research that included a sample of Latino or Hispanic families and children. The US population of children has changed considerably over the past two decades. The number of young children who speak languages other than English has significantly increased (Shultz & Kagan, 2007). Currently, one in seven children entering kindergarten has a primary language other than English and approximately 25% of children under age 5 are Hispanic (Nores, 2013). Immigrant children continue to be the fastest growing segment of the US population with one in four children currently living in an immigrant household (Hernandez, Denton, & Macartney, 2008) and 62% of these children are identified as Latino (Perreira, Chapman & Stein, 2006).

Young language-minority children face certain risk factors for low academic achievement including increased rates of family economic disadvantage, low parental education, and limited English proficiency evident in school performance starting at the beginning of kindergarten (Ansari & Winsler, 2012). First-generation, low-income Hispanic children are more likely to have more challenges in school than any other socioeconomic or generational group in the United States (Reardon & Galindo, 2009). Hispanic parents often exhibit low levels of involvement in their children's schools possibly due to language barrier, a lack of trust, a lack of understanding of the operation of the school, logistical issues, and lack of education by the parent themselves (Smith, Stern, & Shatrova, 2008).



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Given the identified risk for lower academic achievement and school success for this growing population of young children it is important to understand how to effectively address this issue.

Participation in a HIPPY program has been linked to positive outcomes for Hispanic children and families including enhanced school readiness, increased parent involvement, and more enriched home environments.

Parent Involvement Outcomes

The results of the reviewed published studies examining parent outcomes document several benefits of HIPPY program participation including an enriched home learning environments, positive changes in parent engagement in early educational activities at home, and later parent involvement with schools.

Hispanic Parents engage in more literacy and educational activities at home after participating in a HIPPY program.

- Necochea (2007) conducted an experimental study to examine the effects of HIPPY on children's early language skills, emergent literacy, and parent involvement. A randomized control trial design was used with a sample of low-income immigrant Mexican American families. HIPPY program participation was significantly related to self-reported level of parent involvement. Specifically, mothers reported significantly more involvement with their children after 15 weeks in HIPPY compared to the control group in providing home based literacy and language opportunities, quality instruction and interaction, and frequent modeling of literacy activities.
- A quasi-experimental research study conducted with Spanish Speaking families compared randomly selected parents who participated in HIPPY for 6 months and a wait-listed group of parents. After participating in HIPPY, parents were more likely than a comparison group to engage in the types of academic activities at home that help prepare children for school (Nievar, Jacobson, Chen, Johnson, & Dier, 2011). Home observations and parent self-report measures found HIPPY parents to be more likely to provide cognitive stimulation at home and offer their children a greater variety of learning experiences.
- Mothers new to a HIPPY program significantly increased their involvement in home literacy activities across their first year of program participation (Johnson, Martinez-Cantu, Jacobson & Weir, 2012). Parent involvement surveys were administered at the start of HIPPY and again after one program year. Within group analysis revealed a significant increase in reported parent engagement in academic-related activities at home.

Parents who participated in HIPPY also maintained a high level of involvement in their children's education upon school entry.

- In Texas, kindergarten teachers were surveyed about the parent involvement of 5-year-old HIPPY students (Johnson et al., 2012). In the 2007–2008 program year, 87 HIPPY mothers (79% Latina and 76% Spanish speaking) of 3- and 4-year-old children participated in their first year of HIPPY. Teachers were asked to compare level of involvement for HIPPY parents relative to other parents in the classroom. HIPPY parents had frequent school contact during their children's kindergarten year with teachers indicating parents had three or more times when they had personal contact with the teacher (97.8%), attended a conference (96.7%), attended an open house of other program (92.2%), observed in the classroom (41.6%), volunteered for field trips (52.9%) and volunteering in the classroom (61.8%). Overall, teachers reported that more than half (54.4%) of HIPPY parents were more involved in their child's education.

Hispanic mothers who participated in a HIPPY program have reported increased levels of parenting efficacy.

- Low income Spanish speaking mothers reported higher levels of parenting self-efficacy after 6 months participation in a HIPPY program compared to a randomly selected group of mothers on the program wait list (Nievar et al., 2011).

HIPPY program participation has been associated with more enriched home learning environments for Hispanic families.

- In the quasi-experimental study of HIPPY impact on home learning environments of Latino families conducted by Nievar and colleagues (2011) HIPPY program participation was the best predictor of positive ratings of the home environment above income, perceived efficacy, stress, depression and maternal education. HIPPY parents had higher scores on the Parental Involvement and Efficacy measure and the following subscales of the Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME): learning materials, academic stimulation, modeling, and variety. Families in HIPPY had more learning materials in the home, provided a greater variety of learning experiences, and encouraged more types of pre-academic activities in their homes.
- Another study examining the outcomes of the HIPPY program for Latino immigrant families conducted by Nievar and colleagues (2008) revealed significant differences between program participants and the control group on the home environment, marital satisfaction, parental efficacy, and attachment-related stress. In addition, two multiple

regressions indicated a positive program effect on the home environment and children's receptive vocabulary, controlling for income, maternal depression, and contextual factors.

Child School Readiness and Educational Outcomes

Latino students from low income households in urban areas are at particular risk for low academic achievement (Rouse & Fantuzzo, 2009). These risk factors contribute to Latino children often entering kindergarten at a disadvantage for long term school success. Hispanic children have been found to exhibit significant gains academically after participating in a HIPPPY program.

- HIPPPY participation has been associated with higher academic achievement for children from language minority backgrounds. Garcia (2006) conducted a quasi-experimental study to examine academic impact of HIPPPY participation for Hispanic English Language Learners (ELL) students in elementary school. Children who participated in HIPPPY scored higher on academic tests. Scores from state mandated reading and math academic achievement tests administered in third grade were compared for HIPPPY graduates and a matched comparison group of students. Children who participated in HIPPPY scored higher on academic tests compared to peers. The results indicated a statistically significant difference in gains between the children who participated in HIPPPY and those who did not participate. Test results indicated a statistically significant difference in reading, language, mathematics composite scale scores and total composite scale score gains between the children who participated in HIPPPY and those who did not participate.
- The effect of HIPPPY participation on children's early literacy and language skills was examined with Mexican-American immigrant families. Necochea (2007) conducted a randomized control trial (RCT) study to assess emergent literacy and language development after 15 weeks participation in a HIPPPY program; results confirmed a significant positive effect of program participation on expressive language.
- Kindergarten teachers have rated HIPPPY graduates as ready to learn. In a two-site quasi-experimental study in Texas, researchers asked teachers to rate unidentified target students who had participated in a HIPPPY program relative to classroom peers on adaptation and verbal behavior using the Kindergarten Teacher Survey (KTS). Most of the children in the study were living in low-income households and English Language Learners (ELL), or from an ethnic minority. Johnson, et al., (2012) found children who had been enrolled in HIPPPY scored higher than children in the control groups on measures of classroom adaptation. Moreover, they had higher attendance rates, higher prekindergarten enrollment,

and were more likely to be promoted to first grade compared to other kindergartners in the school district. Teachers rated the majority of HIPPPY children as ready for school in classroom adaptability (93.5%) and verbal behavior (89.1%).

Participation in HIPPPY Has Been Positively Related to School Outcomes for Hispanic Children

- HIPPPY has demonstrated positive child outcomes for teenage mothers of children who were Hispanic and primarily spoke Spanish at home. In five urban Texas school districts, kindergarten teachers completed the Kindergarten Readiness Survey, a 45-item survey examining five dimensions of school readiness including social-emotional development, approaches to learning, physical development, language development, and general knowledge for HIPPPY graduates (Brown, 2013). In addition, all of the children either participated in an English as a Second Language (ESL) program or were in bilingual kindergarten classrooms. Adolescent mothers who participated in HIPPPY had children who performed equally with other entering students from traditional-aged mothers who participated in HIPPPY. The research suggests that HIPPPY is as effective in equipping the children of teenage mothers with the skills and knowledge needed to enter school ready to learn as it is with traditional-aged mothers.

Children from Spanish speaking homes who participated in HIPPPY also demonstrated higher scores on standardized math assessments in third grade.

- A third grade follow-up study of HIPPPY graduates from Spanish speaking homes examined performance on reading and math state mandated achievement tests (Nievar, Jacobson, Chen, Johnson, & Dier, 2011). Results from the post-hoc quasi-experimental study showed that HIPPPY graduates scored significantly higher on the math subsections of the standardized test compared to a matched group of low income children in the same school district.
- Johnson et al., (2012) compared achievement scores for state math tests for third grade students the 2007-2008 school year. HIPPPY graduates also scored significantly higher on the math subtest of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) compared to a matched sample of students from similar economic (60.18% qualified for free lunch; 2.78% qualified for reduced lunch) and ethnic backgrounds (85.19% Latino, 12.04% African American, 2.78% Caucasian).

Summary and Future Direction

In the United States, the population of Hispanic children has grown significantly in the past few decades. Studies have documented lower rates of school readiness for Hispanic children at kindergarten entry compared to their Caucasian

and African American peers (Duncan & Magnuson, 2005; Reardon & Galindo, 2009) and significantly lower long term academic achievement compared to their Caucasian and Asian peers (Garcia & Jensen, 2009; Kao & Thompson, 2003; Kohler & Lazarín, 2007). These young children represent a particularly vulnerable population for lower educational performance when families have low economic resources and limited English proficiency.

One of HIPPY's primary goals is to prepare children for long-term school success beginning in kindergarten. The program originated as a parent education program for immigrant families in Israel. Supporting English language learners and Spanish speaking families in the US has been a longstanding program aim. The HIPPY curriculum is available in English and Spanish. The model of service delivery with home visitors from local communities providing home based parent education resources and training also addresses common linguistic, cultural, and resource barriers that may inhibit the provision of early childhood education support for low income Hispanic and immigrant populations.

The studies reviewed in the research brief suggest that HIPPY can support the early and sustained school success of low-income Hispanic children in the United States. The HIPPY program was associated with higher rates of school readiness and elementary school academic achievement in math for children from Hispanic immigrant households. HIPPY program participation has also been associated with positive outcomes for Hispanic parents, as well as more enriched home learning environments (Nievar et al., 2011).

Although study findings to date are positive and promising, the population of immigrant and Spanish speaking families is quite diverse in the US. Young Hispanic children are exposed to English at different ages, differ in their fluency in their native language and English, and vary in the types of family and school resources they experience (Norse, 2013). Future research can help explain how to best support children for immediate and long term development and academic success. Existing studies document lasting academic achievement gains for HIPPY graduates in third math, but not on standardized reading tests. Longer term follow-up and more rigorous studies of differences in educational performance for HIPPY graduates should be conducted to better understand lasting program effects. Future HIPPY research should also examine different program outcomes and implementation experiences of the diverse groups of immigrant and Spanish speaking families across the US.

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